

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF NEW ORLEANS
NEW CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAZANT ROYAL HOUSING COMPLEX**

The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) is seeking reimbursement for federal funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the form of Public Assistance (PA) Program Funding for construction of 136 new housing units in a single four-story multi-family residential building. The objective of the FEMA PA Grant Program is to provide assistance to State, Tribal, and Local Governments, and certain Private Nonprofit (PNP) organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. Through the PA Program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of eligible disaster-damaged facilities. The PA Program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing grants for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

The proposed site is approximately 1.79 acres and is comprised of 10 vacant land parcels with various addresses which have been re-platted into one single lot of record. The site is located within the area bounded by Royal Street to the north, France Street to the east, Chartres Street to the south, and Mazant Street to the west. Of the 136 housing units, 82 units will be rented as affordable housing and 54 would be market rate units. The building will contain a mix of 50 one-bedroom units, 68 two-bedroom units and 18 three-bedroom units. Other planned amenities include a fitness center, business center, community room with media lounge, playground, bicycle parking, on-site vehicle parking, and rooftop terraces. The project supports the city's overall goal of providing quality affordable housing to meet neighborhood needs and promote equity and access to opportunity. The site has been re-platted into a single parcel having the following GPS coordinates: NE corner (29.961020, -90.034867), NW corner (29.961201, -90.035652), SW corner (29.960356, -90.035913), and SE corner (29.960180, -90.035129). It is bounded by Royal Street to the north, France Street to the east, Chartres Street to the south, and Mazant Street to the west. The construction site is located within Bywater Historic District, a district listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

Although HANO currently serves over 20,000 low-income households, the waiting list for assistance from HANO's two main programs remains at over 20,000 additional households. The need to leverage a multitude of financial resources to expand quality affordable opportunities to the maximum number of households is critical. The Preferred Alternative meets the objectives of the Housing Authority and the City of New Orleans to address the overwhelming need for affordable housing in New Orleans by providing high quality, safe and decent affordable housing to its residents in areas that provide access to the necessary tools to achieve economic sustainability.

In the relationship between Louisiana Housing Cooperation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and FEMA, FEMA is the lead agency, and LHC is HUD's delegated entity and is a cooperating agency for this Environmental Assessment. The HUD prepared an Environmental Assessment for HUD-funded Proposals - Mazant Royal Site (HUD 2007) and issued a Finding of No significant Impact (FONSI) dated May 29, 2007 (2007a). The program for the undertaking has been modified which resulted in FEMA preparing an independent draft Environmental Assessment for the scope of work proposed in 2020-2021.

This draft Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates actions undertaken by FEMA to provide financial support to HANO covered in the scope of this document on the proposed construction of 136 new housing units in a single four-story multi-family residential building. This EA also provides the public and decision-makers with the information required to understand and evaluate the potential environmental consequences of these actions and to consider these impacts in the decision-making. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, FEMA's regulations for implementing NEPA in FEMA Directive 108-1: *Environmental*

Planning and Historic Preservation Responsibilities and Program Requirements, the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508. FEMA prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts resulting from FEMA's financial support to HANO covered in the scope of this document on the proposed construction of 136 new housing units in a single four-story multi-family residential building.

Notice of the availability of the draft EA was provided for agency and public review and comment for a period of 30 days. The public notice was posted on the FEMA website at: [FEMA Media Library | FEMA.gov](#) between, October XX, 2022 and November XX, 2022. Hard copies of the document were available at the following locations: New Orleans Main Library, 219 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70112 (Monday – Thursday 10am – 6pm, Friday and Saturday 10am – 5pm), Alvar Library, 913 Alvar Street, New Orleans, LA 70117 (Monday – Thursday 10am – 6pm, Friday and Saturday 10am – 5pm).

CONDITIONS

Actions under this EA and FONSI must meet the following conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions would make the FONSI determination inapplicable for the project and could jeopardize the receipt of funding.

1. The Sub-recipient must follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and requirements and obtain and comply with all required permits and approvals prior to initiating work.
2. If human bone or unmarked grave(s) are present within the project area, compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) is required. The sub-recipient shall notify the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction where the remains are located within twenty-four hours of the discovery. The sub-recipient shall also notify FEMA and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology at 225-342-8170 within seventy-two hours of the discovery.
3. If during the course of work, archaeological artifacts (prehistoric or historic) are discovered, the sub-recipient shall stop work in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The sub-recipient shall inform their Public Assistance (PA) contacts at FEMA, who will in turn contact FEMA Historic Preservation (HP) staff. The sub-recipient will not proceed with work until FEMA EHP completes consultation with the SHPO, and others as appropriate.
4. Sub-recipient must comply with all local, state, and federal requirements related to sediment control, disposal of solid waste, control and containment of spills, and discharge of surface runoff and/or stormwater from the site.
5. If the project results in a discharge to waters of the State, an LPDES permit may be required in accordance with the Clean Water Act and the Louisiana Clean Water Code. If the project results in a discharge of wastewater to an existing wastewater treatment system, that wastewater treatment system may need to modify its LPDES permit before accepting the additional wastewater. In order to minimize indirect impacts (erosion, sedimentation, dust, and other construction-related disturbances) to nearby waters of the U.S. and surrounding drainage areas, the contractor must ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements related to sediment control, disposal of solid waste, control and containment of spills, and discharge of surface runoff and stormwater from the site. All documentation pertaining to these activities and Sub-recipient compliance with any conditions should be forwarded to LA GOHSEP and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.
6. All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities. LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than one acre. It is recommended

that you contact the LDEQ Water Permits Division at (225) 219-9371 to determine if your proposed project requires a permit.

7. Per 44 C.F.R. § 9.11(d)(6), no project should be built to a floodplain management standard that is less protective than what the community has adopted in local ordinances through their participation in the NFIP. Per 44 C.F.R. § 9.11(d)(9), for the replacement of building contents, materials, and equipment, where possible disaster-proofing of the building and/or elimination of such future losses should occur by relocation of those building contents, materials, and equipment outside or above the base floodplain. The Sub-recipient is required to coordinate with the local floodplain administrator regarding floodplain permit(s) prior to the start of any activities. All coordination pertaining to these activities and Sub-recipient compliance with any conditions must be documented and copies forwarded to the LA GOHSEP and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.
8. In order to comply with FEMA floodplain requirements and to be eligible for project funding, after construction of the proposed project and prior to FEMA project close-out, additional verification will be needed to ensure that proper coordination occurred regarding work within the floodplain. The following documentation will be required:
 - a. A copy of the Post-Construction Elevation Certificate (EC) signed/sealed by licensed surveyor, engineer, or architect as well as the local floodplain administrator (LFA); or
 - b. If the post-construction EC is not signed by the local Floodplain Administrator, then a Certificate of Occupancy signed by the LFA or a letter from the local Floodplain Administrator stating the structure was built in compliance with the local floodplain ordinance.
9. All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region.
10. If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
11. Site Specific Environmental Assessment – per LDEQ comments “Due to the location of the property in an older developed area of New Orleans and the proposed residential land use, a thorough and site-specific environmental assessment needs to be completed in order to protect site workers as well as future residents. This assessment should consider both potential on-site and off-site sources, and include an evaluation of the enclosed space pathway for the proposed development.

FINDINGS

Based upon the information contained in the EA, the potential impacts resulting from the two alternatives (no action and proposed action) analyzed in the EA, and in accordance with FEMA's regulations for implementing NEPA in FEMA Directive 108-1: *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Responsibilities and Program Requirements*, and Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management), 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and 12898 (Environmental Justice), FEMA finds that the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared. This FONSI is based upon the proposed action described in the EA and meeting all conditions prescribed for that project type.

APPROVALS

Jerame Cramer
Environmental/Historic Preservation Program Lead, FEMA
Louisiana Integration and Recovery Office

Eddie Williams
Public Assistance Program Lead, FEMA
Louisiana Integration and Recovery Office